

ACCESS AMERICA

Mentoring American Girls for Success in Careers, Life

A brief profile of just one of the many thousands of American nongovernmental organizations that advance humanitarian goals and human rights



Girls on the Run programs for young adolescent girls culminate in a five-kilometer run. (Anissa Freeman/Girls on the Run)

Washington – Girls who are coached in sports, leadership and academics from as young as 8 years old are better equipped to combat social pressures and enter adulthood as healthy individuals, says social worker and triathlete Molly Barker,

founder of Girls on the Run, a nongovernmental organization (NGO).

“Peer pressure plays a big role in a child’s development in the middle school years,” Barker told USINFO. “Girl-only groups provide a ripe environment to discuss the challenges that peer pressure can bring and an opportunity to create coping strategies to handle this pressure before it actually exists.” In the United States, middle school usually refers to grades six, seven and eight.

According to published reports by the American Psychological Association, young girls in the United States are vulnerable to some of the same mental health problems facing some women today, including low self-confidence and

depression. Programs designed specifically to help adolescent girls stay mentally healthy and obtain tools to be successful at school, at home and in life are becoming increasingly important, said Anissa Freeman, executive officer of Girls on the Run.

Girls on the Run sponsors programs in the United States for girls 8 to 13 years old that combine training for a five-kilometer running event with confidence-building workouts.

Because the before- and after-school programs provide lessons that enhance emotional and social health, the benefits are more than physical.

For example, at an early morning practice in February at a primary school in Arlington,

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FROM THE AMBASSADOR

Civic activism is the backbone of a healthy democracy because it engages citizens in efforts to develop, maintain, and strengthen the kind of society of which we want to be a part. In America, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) touch many aspects of our society: hospitals, colleges and universities, social service agencies, symphony orchestras, civic organizations, business associations, labor unions, and political parties. NGOs are private organizations, created and run by individual citizens working in partnership with government and communities to strengthen our society. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has stated that “it is imperative that democratic governments work in concert to defend the vital role that NGOs play in building free societies.” We all benefit from the involvement of citizens in improving our communities and lives.

—Robert F. Godec

From the IRC

In 2005, Forbes magazine published a list of top U.S. charities, many of them also popular NGOs for volunteers. The top 25 below together received over \$50 billion in donations:

1. [Mayo Foundation](#)
2. [YMCAs in the United States](#)
3. [United Way](#)
4. [Cleveland Clinic Foundation](#)
5. [Catholic Charities USA](#)
6. [American National Red Cross](#)
7. [Salvation Army](#)
8. [Goodwill Industries International](#)
9. [New York-Presbyterian Hospital](#)
10. [The Arc of the United States](#)
11. [Mount Sinai](#)
12. [Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center](#)
13. [Cedars-Sinai Medical Center](#)
14. [Henry Ford Health System](#)
15. [Boys & Girls Clubs of America](#)
16. [Children's Hospital of Philadelphia](#)
17. [Feed the Children](#)
18. [Shriners Hospitals for Children](#)
19. [American Cancer Society](#)
20. [Habitat for Humanity International](#)
21. [Children's Hospital](#)
22. [Planned Parenthood Federation of America](#)
23. [Nature Conservancy](#)
24. [Gifts in Kind International](#)
25. [Easter Seals](#)

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Virginia, girls learned the importance of making and keeping promises. Coach Jenn Brown used cue cards to prompt discussions related to keeping promises and then incorporated lessons into relay races. Even simply placing the cue cards at poles around the track field and having the girls race to find them and discuss them in teams drove the point home.

"If you keep your promise, people will trust you," said Isabel, age 10, who has participated in Girls on the Run for three years. "The [Girls on the Run] practices

really push you to do all you can do."

"The running makes me feel good about myself, respect myself," said Elise, age 11. "If you take the practices seriously, it's not hard to run the race."

For more information on Girls on the Run see the group's website at www.girlsontherun.org.

—Adapted from a March 7, 2007 article by USINFO Staff Writer Carolee Walker

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DID YOU KNOW?

According to "Giving USA 2007" a publication prepared by the Center on Philanthropy, private American charitable giving reached \$295.02 billion in 2006, or 2.2 percent of gross domestic product, setting a new record.

PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program (FLTA)

The American Center is pleased to announce the availability of scholarships for young English language educators to teach and study in the USA for the academic year 2008-2009. FLTA is an opportunity for young teachers of English to refine their teaching skills, increase their English language proficiency and extend their knowledge of American culture and customs while strengthening the instruction of Arabic language at U.S. colleges and universities.

Applicants must be teachers of English or in training to become teachers of English; between 21 and 29 years of age at the time of application; holding BA degree; with fluency in English as demonstrated by a minimum TOEFL score of 550; demonstrating proficiency in speaking, writing, and teaching Modern Standard Arabic. The application deadline is November 23, 2007.

An orientation session on this program will be held at the U.S. Embassy in Tunis (Les Berges du Lac) on Friday, October 26, 2007 at 2:00 PM.

—For more information on this exciting exchange program opportunity visit our web site at tunis.usembassy.gov or Program Specialist Sami Saaied at 71-107-259 or saaieds@state.gov.



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Reflections by Khadouja MELLOULI, participant in the International Visitor Leadership Program 2007



Khadouja Mellouli (center) and fellow IVLP participants enjoy a cruise.

Khadouja MELLOULI **International Visitor** **Leadership Program 2007 -** **“NGO Management II”**

Places visited in the United States

Washington, D.C.; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Portland, Oregon; Tulsa, Oklahoma; Portland, Maine

Home in Tunisia

Bizerte

Fondest memory of the United States

I met wonderful people. My time at the USA was special and inspirational!

Probably, my best memory is listening to all the people through meetings with non-profit organization representatives. In every word I heard, every action, project, program and activity described, I felt that everyone was looking for a way to give to their community and to participate in making their community better. That was amazing!

It was as if I had travelled halfway around the world to find

myself again, renew my faith in human kindness. For all the courtesy and kind consideration that I experienced, I feel enriched and revitalized.

Briefly describe your experience

First, the program gave us the opportunity to visit different cities with the USA (from the East to the West) and this in itself was a good experience to know USA and its diversity and multiethnicity. Second, the program presented innovative management strategies by non-profits in the USA, and their relations with the public and private sectors. Indeed, the dynamic relationships between government, business, and non-profit organizations were very interesting and something to learn from!

Last, I had the opportunity to participate actively as a volunteer in a charity activity that had been organized by a program to support the homeless, which was amazing! I am a volunteer in a women's organization in Tunisia called “Women for Sustainable Development” and I work with

an international NGO called ‘Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR), but being a volunteer for one day to serve lunch or dinner to the homeless, gave me a taste of another kind of voluntarism. It was another kind of satisfaction and gave me a very rewarding feeling.

Lessons learned

Non-profits can make a change in a society; a democratic environment is crucial for the flowering of the civil society and its development.

The spirit of voluntarism or “culture of giving” is also one of the lessons I learned. “Learn to give” is cultural. It shows the responsibility of each individual and citizen in the society. People making contributions is an positive action for a good community but also for personal satisfaction.

Advice for others

Don't hesitate, just go and discover another world. The program is a good opportunity to share, learn, and exchange.

What I miss most about the United States

What I miss about the U.S. is the kindness and the availability of people everywhere in the USA and the the strong feeling that humankind can make a better world.

I cherish the memory of this wonderful opportunity and thank all those who made it possible, especially all people who welcomed us in their organizations and their home, for their unfailing kindness and generosity of spirit.

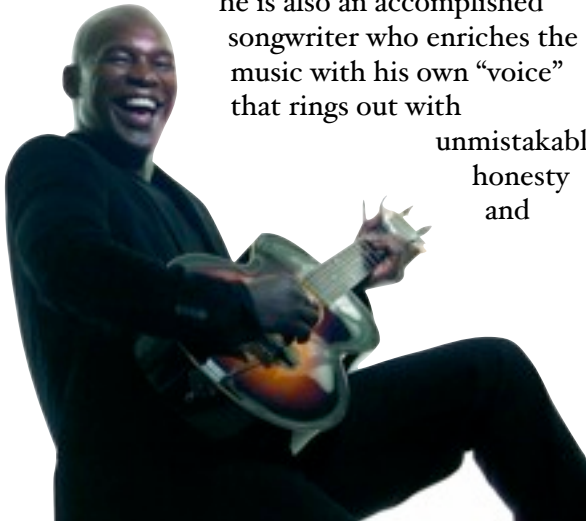
KEITH B. BROWN PLAYS THE ACROPOLIUM:

U.S. Embassy sponsors country blues artist's appearance as part of Octobre Musicale de Carthage

Country blues artist Keith B. Brown will take the stage at the Acropolis in Carthage on **Wednesday, October 31 at 8:00 PM** in a show sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Tunis as part of Octobre Musicale de Carthage.

Keith B's talent lies not only in faithfully interpreting the blues tradition, he is also an accomplished songwriter who enriches the music with his own "voice" that rings out with

unmistakable honesty and



Country blues artist Keith B. Brown.

conviction. Living Blues Magazine proclaimed that Keith B's music is imbued with "riveting emotionalism, flawless musicianship and erudition."

As Keith B says: "It is important for me to be faithful to the masters and creators of the music, at the same time, it is essential for me and the tradition to tell my own stories, just as they did when they were creating and defining the form. Storytelling is the fabric of the tradition itself, and in order for this music to continue to thrive and evolve, we must be faithful to that tradition...we must tell our own stories."

Keith B's growing recognition as an artist has not only caught the eyes and ears of the music world, but is in demand by the film industry as well. Most recently Brown was picked by Martin Scorsese and Wim Wenders to star in the major motion picture "The Soul Of A Man". The film was an "official selection" at the 2003 Cannes Film Festival.

—Excerpted from the official Keith B. Brown web site at www.kbrownblue.net.

Calendar

Free English Conversation

Every Thursday

American Corner at AMIDEAST

Weekly discussions on topics from films and music to religion. Topics are posted weekly in the American Corner and at AMIDEAST. 1:00 PM

Study in the USA Consultations

Every Tuesday-Friday

AMIDEAST Advising Resource Library

Browse materials from U.S. universities consult resources on applications and scholarships. 9:00 AM-4:00 PM

Open Access

Every Monday-Friday

American Corner at AMIDEAST

Peruse books and magazines in English on topics from history to pop culture and more. 10:00 AM-6:00 PM

Keith B. Brown -- Country Blues Artist

Wednesday, October 31

Acropoleum, in Carthage

Enjoy a country blues performance by singer-guitarist Keith B. Brown in the magical setting of the Acropoleum during the Octobre Musicale de Carthage 8 p.m..



The American Center

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